

May 31, 1952

Dr. Francis J. Ryan
Zoology Department
Columbia University
New York 27, N.Y.

Dear Francis:

Phyllis Fried has reminded me that you are expecting a letter in reference to her qualifications as a research assistant.

She was examined for her M.S. just a few minutes ago, and did very well indeed. I would be pleased to have her continue here for the Ph.D., but I think she is wise to defer further graduate study until she is more certain of her personal objectives. Before she started to work on her own master's problem, a re-evaluation of the linkage sequence in K-12, she served for a while as a general factotum. I would not say that she was an experienced executive yet (like Lil), but I am certain you will not find any better for the salary range to which I understand you are limited. Phyllis responds very well to intellectual stimulation, and it would be to your mutual advantage if she had some level of responsibility for it. However, she has no pretensions about herself. She is capable of intelligent assistance, and a very considerable degree of independence, but in this sort of position will look to you for leadership. In the lab. she has become acquainted with all of the usual techniques, media, etc. of bacterial genetic work, and you would be able to indoctrinate her in your procedures and jargon very quickly (after all, much of it has been inherited here from you).

Phyllis is, if anything, too much of a student. She came here from Brooklyn in 1950 with a 2.42/3.00 "grade-point average", for all that's worth, and has done as well here (I especially don't put much faith in graduate academic records, since A and B are the only passing grades). She came here with a rather good background in general biology, has taken our Genetics curriculum, and has also taken ~~the~~ Medical Microbiology (as also taken by the medical students) and Immunology courses. She has had math through elementary calculus, chemistry through organic and biology, and some biochemistry. Personally, she is a quiet, pleasant, attractive girl, very serious and conscientious about her work, and with a deep sense of responsibility generally. You would be very fortunate to have her in a position like Lil's, which I think she could fill as well with a little more experience. She will not complain at any drudgery, but you will get more from her if you give her leadership rather than over-detailed instruction.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg